

AT A MEETING OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 14, 2012 IN THE BOARD ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA:

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. Lau, Chair, called the meeting to order.

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:**

Mr. Tuttle established the presence of a quorum.

Present:        Frank Lau, Chair  
                     Joel Donahue, Vice-Chair  
                     John Tuttle, Secretary  
                     William Seitz, Member  
                     Bryan Katz, Member  
                     Bryan Rice, Member  
                     Cindy W. Disney, Member  
                     Steven Sandy, Planning Director  
                     Dari Jenkins, Planning & Zoning Administrator  
                     Brea Hopkins, Planning & Zoning Technician

Absent:         Jamie MacLean, Development Planner  
                     Jeanne Stosser, Member  
                     Robert Miller, Member  
                     Chris Tuck, Board of Supervisors Liaison

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

On a motion by Mr. Donahue, and seconded by Mr. Rice, and unanimously carried the agenda was approved.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

On a motion Mr. Donahue, and seconded by Mr. Seitz, and unanimously carried the consent agenda was approved.

**PUBLIC ADDRESS:**

Mr. Lau opened the public address; however, there being no speakers present, the public address was closed.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

Review of the following public facility for conformance with the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan in accordance with VA Code Section 15.2-2232:

Appalachian Power's proposal to construct approximately 7.5 miles of 138 kV transmission line, known as the Falling Branch-Merrimac Project, to reinforce the

transmission grid that serves customers in Montgomery County, the Town of Blacksburg and the Town of Christiansburg. The project will connect to the existing Merrimac and Falling Branch substations. The company's application to the VA State Corporation Commission (SCC) identifies a Preferred Route – a 500' wide corridor in which ultimately a 100' right of way will be located. The SCC hearing examiner has recommended the approval of the preferred route. The new facilities will be constructed using a combination of single pole structures with an average height of 100 feet in more developed areas and H-frame structures with an average height of 80 feet in more rural areas. Both types of structures will require a 100 foot-wide right of way. The project is located in the mid-County area of Montgomery County in areas designated as Rural, Resource Stewardship, Residential Transition, Urban Expansion and Urban Development Area in the Montgomery County 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Lau introduced the request.

Mr. Sandy stated Appalachian Power was proposing the new transmission line to increase power supply to properties within Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and the County. Several routes were proposed to connect existing substations in Falling Branch and Merrimac. The right of way necessary for the transmission line would be 100 feet; however, APCo has developed a preferred 500-ft. wide corridor. He reviewed the preferred route which crosses the mid-county area. The purpose of the 2232 review is to review the public facility as it relates to the objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. A public hearing is optional; however, was requested by the Board of Supervisors. In 2008 the Board of Supervisors, passed a resolution supporting the preferred route using existing right of way as possible. The SCC Hearing Examiner also issued recommendation for the preferred route outlined by AEP. Mr. Sandy reviewed sections of the Comprehensive Plan relating to the public utility review. The preferred route attempts to avoid residential areas/subdivisions; however, there are a few residential areas that would be impacted. There may be opportunities to mitigate those areas by revising the route to be on the edge of the subdivisions. There is one AFD district that will be impacted; however, the route is along the existing railroad line. The line is proposed to be placed across the landfill property; therefore, DEQ and other agencies have been involved as necessary. It has been requested that pole placement be considered when crossing this property.

Mr. Lau opened the public hearing.

Mr. Art Hamrick, business owner next to one of the projects on Cambria Street, stated Appalachian Power does not obey safety codes. If a power line goes down on the railroad line there could be harm to residents. The poles should be constructed on either side of the railroad. The project along Cambria Street was built on a cave and next to a natural gas line. There was not a public meeting held regarding that substation. The County should turn down any request for a new power line until they bring existing substations into compliance. Substations should be located in industrial areas away from natural gas lines or railroads.

Mr. Sandy stated the substation referenced is in the Town of Christiansburg. There is not a new substation proposed as part of the route being discussed.

There being no other speakers present, Mr. Lau closed public hearing.

Mr. Lau stated the location of the power line in relationship to the railroad should be considered.

Mr. Sandy stated the line would intersect with the railroad in a couple of locations; however, would mostly run parallel to the rail line.

Mr. Rice stated the transmission line appears to bisect Blake Forest Subdivision. He noted that the line should be placed on the perimeter subdivision if possible.

Mr. Sandy stated the Planning Commission could include that consideration be given to avoid the bisection of subdivisions with their recommendation. It should be noted that APCo cannot mitigate all issues and there has been an attempt to divert from major areas of residential development.

A motion was made by Mr. Donahue, seconded by Mr. Katz to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that Appalachian Power Company's proposed transmission line was found to be substantially in accord with the Montgomery County 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioners suggested several recommendations be forwarded to APCo and the Virginia SCC to ensure compliance with County land use goals and objectives of the Plan as follows:

- Proposed line should be routed to have least amount of impact on existing businesses, residences and view sheds.
- Proposed line should follow railroad and power line rights of way wherever possible to minimize additional negative impacts particularly when crossing an Agricultural and Forestal District (AFD).
- The proposed line should be located along property lines to the maximum extent possible to avoid bisecting parcels and existing subdivisions such as Blake Forest Subdivision.
- APCo should coordinate with the Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority for any pole placements within the landfill property.
- Proposed power line structures should be designed and located to have the least visual impact and to accommodate telecommunication antennae placement by telecommunication providers to further the goals of the County's Comprehensive Plan for co-location.

Ayes: Disney, Donahue, Katz, Lau, Rice, Seitz, Tuttle  
Nays: None  
Abstain: None

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### Election of Officers

Mr. Donahue reported the nominating committee offered the following nominations for the 2013 year:

Chair: Mr. Rice

Vice chair: Mr. Donahue

Secretary: Ms. Disney

There were not any additional nominations.

Mr. Lau called for a vote on the proposed nominations.

Ayes: Disney, Donahue, Katz, Lau, Rice, Seitz, Tuttle  
Nays: None  
Abstain: None

### Tourism Council Liaison Appointment

Mr. Sandy stated there is a new Tourism Council and a tourism director has been hired. It is a joint council with the Towns. A workshop will be held to kick off the council and then will meet monthly to discuss what residents, businesses, and other affected parties would like to see as it relates to tourism initiatives. The meetings tentatively will be held on 4th Thursday at 10 am. The kick off meeting is on Dec. 18th from 8-12. The location has not yet been determined; however, all are welcome to attend.

Mr. Rice stated he could attend during the day and would attend the December 18th meeting.

### **WORKSESSION:**

On a motion by Mr. Seitz, seconded by Mr. Rice and unanimously carried the Planning Commission entered into worksession.

#### Comprehensive Plan- Transportation Chapter Discussion

Mr. Sandy stated an intern is gathering and compiling various transportation plans. Staff attended a presentation from VDOT regarding the new law and the process for plan approvals. VDOT will look at the plans when funding is requested for projects. A notice will need to be sent to VDOT with an anticipated completion date for the transportation plan. Given the time necessary for review, staff is suggesting that June 2014 be the deadline.

#### 2013 Work Program Discussion

Mr. Sandy reviewed the draft 2013 Work Program. LDO is still a major project for the Planning and GIS department. Currently, staff is working on a field data component and will begin web development within the year. A grant was received to enhance the LDO system and work with Virginia Utility Protection Services to develop a program to create an interface that they can obtain permitting information and exchange their utility information. Mr. Sandy discussed other ongoing and upcoming projects such as the Safe Routes To School grant applications, comprehensive plan review, reassessment process, GIS assistance with 911 consolidation, mobile home park addressing, and the potential development of a new GIS platform.

Mr. Seitz recommended completing a karst survey as a possible project.

The work program will be finalized and presented at the next meeting for acceptance.

#### NRV Livability Update

Mr. Sandy stated the New River Valley Planning District Commission (NRVPDC) received a grant to work on the Livability project. A report has been distributed to provide information regarding the project status. It reviews regional issues, goals and strategies.

He noted he has discussed with Nicole Hair and Anne McClung the idea of holding a joint planning commission meeting for the Town and County Planning Commissions. A possibility for that meeting is having the NRVPDC present information regarding the Livability Initiative, transportation road projects, jurisdiction issues, and possibly the NRV Built game.

On a motion by Mr. Donahue, seconded by Mr. Disney and unanimously carried the Planning Commission closed the worksession.

### **LIAISON REPORTS:**

Board of Supervisors: No report.

Agriculture & Forestal District: No report.

Blacksburg Planning Commission: Mr. Lau stated Blacksburg Planning Commission may be discussing mixed use development consisting of business, civic, etc. in the future. Mr. Langrehr stated the Blacksburg Middle School has been a major topic with a request for rezoning expected the 1<sup>st</sup> of December.

Christiansburg Planning Commission: No report.

Economic Development Committee: No report.

Public Service Authority: Mr. Donahue stated there has been discussion of making the PSA a department of the county due to budgetary constraints.

Parks & Recreation: No report.

Radford Planning Commission: No report.

School Board: No report.

Planning Director's Report: Mr. Sandy noted Safe Route To School grant applications would be submitted for Auburn & Belview Elementary since this will most likely be the last year for 100% funding.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.